

Message Text

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SUBJECT : VISIT OF ERDA OFFICIAL, NORMAN BROWN

REF : STATE 286029

1. DUE TO AIRPLANE SCHEDULING DIFFICULTIES, DR. BROWN'S VISIT TO BANGLADESH WAS LIMITED TO A 24-HOUR PERIOD. HOWEVER, DURING THAT TIME HE WAS ABLE TO DISCUSS THE SUBJECT OF LOW LEVEL ENERGY REQUIREMENTS WITH A NUMBER OF KEY PERSONS IN THE BDG AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.
2. AT A WORKING LUNCHEON HOSTED BY AMBASSADOR MASTERS, DR. BROWN HAD WIDE RANGING DISCUSSIONS WITH DR. INNIS ALI, SCIENCE ADVISOR TO THE PRESIDENT; MR. W. CHOWDHURY, POWER DEVELOPMENT BOARD CHAIRMAN; DR. ANWAR HOSSAIN, ACTING CHAIRMAN ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION; AND MR. ABDUL QUAYUM, DIRECTOR PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION. ALTHOUGH THESE OFFICIALS ARE NORMALLY CONCERNED WITH LARGE SCALE ENERGY PROJECTS, HE FOUND THAT THEY HAD A DEEP INTEREST AND WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT LOW LEVEL ENERGY SYSTEMS. THEY ALL AGREED THAT MAJOR CONVENTIONAL POWER SYSTEMS COULD NOT DEAL WITH MANY OF THE ENERGY PROBLEMS OF BANGLADESH. THEY ACKNOWLEDGED THE INEFFICIENCY OF CURRENT ENERGY USAGE SUCH AS DUNG FIRES AND BULLOCK POWER AND WERE VERY RECEPTIVE TO NEW IDEAS OF INCORPORATING APPLIED SIMPLE TECHNOLOGIES WHICH WOULD GIVE IMPROVED ENERGY SOURCES TO THE RURAL POPULATION. THEY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVE LOW LEVEL ENERGY SCHEUMES IS NECESSARY FOR MEETING

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THE CONTINUING DEMANDS IN THE RURAL AREAS. THEY WERE

PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN THE POSSIBLE USES OF WIND, WATER AND SOLAR POWER AS WELL AS BIO-GAS GENERATION. DR. ALI PROMISED TO FORM A NATIONAL ENERGY SUBCOMMITTEE WHICH WOULD BE SPECIFICALLY CHARGED WITH OUTLINING THE NEEDS FOR LOW ENERGY SOURCES AND DEVELOPING THE TECHNOLOGY TO PROVIDE FOR THEM.

3. DURING THE AFTERNOON DR. BROWN REVIEWED MANY OF THESE IDEAS WITH USAID STAFF MEMBERS TO DETERMINE POSSIBILITIES FOR RURAL ENERGY PROJECTS. IT WAS AGREED THAT USAID WOULD LOOK INTO THE FEASIBILITY STUDY POSSIBILITIES FOR ALTERNATIVE LOW COST, LOW ENERGY SYSTEMS, BUT NO SPECIFIC PROJECT IDEAS WERE DEVELOPED. POSSIBLE APPROACHES COULD BE TO EXPAND THE SCOPE OF THE RURAL ELECTRIFICATION STUDY OR TO DESIGN A SPECIFIC STUDY OF LOW ENERGY POWER SYSTEM ALTERNATIVES.

4. DR. BROWN ALSO HAD A VERY PRODUCTIVE MEETING WITH DR. JOHN BRISCOE WHO IS WORKING ON A COMBINED BIO-GAS PRODUCTION AND SANITATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT STUDY UNDER THE FORD FOUNDATION. HIS FIELD WORK AT MATLAB BAZAAR GAVE DR. BROWN SOME EXCELLENT INFORMATION ON LOCAL FIELD CONDITIONS FOR PROJECTS OF THIS TYPE.

5. AMBASSADOR MASTERS AND ACTING USAID DIRECTOR WILSON WERE BOTH IMPRESSED WITH THE LOGIC BEHIND DEVELOPING LOW COST, LOW ENERGY SYSTEMS AND AGREED TO USE THE RESOURCES OF THE MISSION TO STUDY POSSIBILITIES FOR U.S. SUPPORT IN THIS AREA. DR. BROWN DID NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT TIME TO BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH LARGE NUMBER OF INTERESTED PEOPLE OR TO SEE ANY OF THE FIELD INITIATIVES BEING MADE IN BANGLADESH, BUT NEVERTHELESS HIS TRIP PROVIDED A VERY STRONG STIMULUS TO BDG THINKING AND THE MISSION LOOKS FORWARD TO FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES.

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